

**A Visit to El Golfo de Santa Clara**  
**By Barbara Atkinson**

El Golfo de Santa Clara, a shrimp fishing village with a few hotels and three restaurants, is about a 4 1/2 hour drive from Central Phoenix. This includes a stop for gas and Mexican car insurance. I stayed at the slightly tattered yet very clean Las Conchas Hotel, the only hotel on the beach, for \$40 per night. There was no heat (it was cold at night) and the television only had one station with poor reception. The hot water was warm, the electrical wiring had been rigged, no one spoke English. Typical. There is a new hotel in town off the main road, Hotel Villas del Sol. The few extra dollars (\$48 for one person, \$53 for two) is where I'll be staying next time. All rooms have heat, satellite TV, a small refrigerator, and a microwave. Their center patio has a built-in barbeque so you can grill your catch of the day.

Except for hotel reservations, you can get by without speaking much Spanish. It is not as easy as in Puerto Peñasco where just about everyone speaks English fluently. The local Mexicans are very patient and understanding. Given there were probably 1,000 people in the village, there is a sizeable American and Canadian population - some are permanent, some vacationers, some weekenders. During spring break the population is said to swell to 30,000. Even though most of the local hotels are expanding, there are still less than 250 rooms in town. During Spring Break kids primarily camp out but sleep everywhere, even on door steps, and generally behave badly. There are about 5 adolescent deaths each year due to Spring Break activities.

I was able to eat at two of the three restaurants. The restaurant at the Las Conchas Hotel has a traditional Mexican menu. The seafood soup was outstanding. El Capitan is an American watering hole. The menu is primarily tacos, enchiladas, french fries, and, being a watering hole, beer. As is typical in Mexico, there is a complete void of green vegetables everywhere. The street vendors really serve up the best of the local cuisine.

There were lots of RVs, many parked on the beach. One surprise was finding a very nicely kept Colorado River Adventures membership only RV park. Colorado River Adventures has seven RV parks along the Colorado River. El Golfo is just south of the Colorado River Delta, a costal wetland supporting 150 bird species and the endangered desert pupfish. There is a Field Station just before reaching town that is used for the study and evaluation of natural resources and biodiversity. Ecotourism is a growing business in the area.

El Golfo is know for it's sand dunes. There were lots of ATVs that you can ride on the beach (something you can't do in Puerto Peñasco). Those with ATVs, motorcycles, and dune buggies were having a blast riding the beach front dunes to the south of town. And of course, fishing in the Sea of Cortez is always great. The tides are less pronounced in El Golfo than in Puerto Peñasco, probably due to the proximity to Baja and the Colorado River Delta. The sand on the beaches is much finer. There is no comparison with the variety and size of the sea shells. I did bring back some monster sea shells and fossilized sand dollars.

El Golfo de Santa Clara is still very undeveloped. In town there is water, electricity, and telephone. There is a plan to install municipal sewer to replace the septic systems. Most streets are unpaved. Not a surprise - real estate is priced far more reasonably than in booming Puerto Peñasco. Lots start at about \$12,000. A 5 bedroom 4 bath house in town with an ocean view runs about \$130,000. There are also large tracks of beach front land for sale, something you won't find in Puerto Peñasco. There is no infrastructure so any development will need to be self-contained. There are two master planned development parcels in the area, Punta Tortuga and Punta Delfin, that appear to be waiting for financing to begin construction. While I was there I looked at a 27 acre lot that slopes nicely to 200 meters of beach front. It is currently priced about 30% under appraised value.

To help you get a better understanding, I put together a virtual tour of El Golfo de Santa Clara at <http://www.flyinside.com/tour.php?id=18637>. (I'm not the greatest photo journalist). Call me if you would like more information about properties in El Golfo de Santa Clara or would like to arrange take a trip down.

Barbara Atkinson  
Direct: 602-323-4359  
[Barbara@ArizonaCashFlowClub.com](mailto:Barbara@ArizonaCashFlowClub.com)